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Viewing cable 06BEIRUT2518, TFLE01: SOURCES: HIZBALLAH FEELS IT IS WINNING

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Understanding cables

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06BEIRUT2518**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06BEIRUT2518	2006-08-02 10:54	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN	Embassy Beirut

Appears in these articles:

[not](#)
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VZCZCXRO8062
PP RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK
DE RUEHLB #2518 2141054
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 021054Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4865
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 002518

SIPDIS

NOFORN
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/2016
TAGS: [IR](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: TFLE01: SOURCES: HIZBALLAH FEELS IT IS WINNING

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey D. Feltman. Reason: Section 1.4 (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C/NF) On August 1, three reliable sources on Hizballah told us that Hizballah believes it is winning the war with Israel. Former UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel said that Hizballah has already won in the minds of the Lebanese people for standing up to Israel. Israeli tactics and ineffectiveness has also rallied some non-Shia to support Hizballah. Regarding the ground fighting in southern Lebanon, Goksel said that Hizballah is eager for Israel to occupy some land and is holding back its best fighters in the event of a larger Israeli invasion. Shia journalist Abbas Sabbagh told us that morale is high among both the Shia populace and among Hizballah fighters. Shia MP Ali Osseirran reported that Hizballah's popularity is growing, even among Sunnis and Christians in Sidon. End summary.

"HIZBALLAH'S ALREADY WON"

2. (C/NF) On August 1, econoff and polstaff talked to three reliable sources with at least indirect access to Hizballah. Former UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel, Shia journalist Abbas Sabbagh, and MP Ali Osseirran all assessed that Hizballah believed it was winning the war with Israel. Goksel said that Hizballah has already won in the minds of the Shia population, and much of the non-Shia population, by standing up to the IDF this long. In addition, Goksel said that Lebanese across the board view certain Israeli military actions--razing villages, killing civilians even if unintentional--as atrocities. This is causing the southern population to seek protection with Hizballah. He was recently surprised to see Sunnis supporting Hizballah and calling them heroes. Goksel commented that Hizballah will likely come out of the conflict stronger for which "we will all pay the price."

3. (C/NF) Analyzing Hizballah military tactics, Goksel said that Hizballah is waiting for Israel to occupy southern Lebanon. Then Hizballah can begin its guerrilla operations in earnest and "it will get really ugly." As he reported last week, Goksel said that it appears Hizballah is using only local militiamen to combat the limited Israeli ground incursions thus far. Hizballah is keeping its elite fighters in reserve to counter a larger invasion.

MORALE HIGH

4. (C/NF) Shia journalist Abbas Sabbagh based in south Beirut told us that morale among Hizballah fighters and the Shia populace is high. He did not see how any Israeli military campaign can defeat Hizballah at this point. The only way to disarm Hizballah would be an internal Lebanese decision to do so, he commented. According to Sabbagh, the decrease in Hizballah rocket launches during the Israeli self-described 48-hour airstrike pause was due to the visit of the Iranian foreign minister. The message was: "We can turn the spigot on or off whenever we want."

5. (C/NF) Ali Osseirran, a Shia MP nominally in Speaker Berri's parliamentary bloc, told us that in confessionally diverse Sidon, Shia, Sunni, and Christian residents are showing solidarity with Hizballah. Hizballah's support in the Shia community remains high not only because of the perceived brutality of Israeli tactics, but because of the perception that Israel's military campaign has been ineffective against Hizballah. This support has been getting stronger everyday, according to Osseirran. Regarding the proposed multi-national stabilization force, Osseirran commented: "Did you forget what happened during the '80s?"

FELTMAN